

The National Prevention Strategy

An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve the Nation's Health through Prevention

The National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy (National Prevention Strategy) provides an unprecedented opportunity to shift the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on wellness and prevention. Currently, chronic diseases and conditions account for at least 7 of every 10 deaths in the United States and for more than 75% percent of medical care expenditures. Many of these conditions are preventable. Bringing a focus on the prevention of disease and promotion of wellness to the forefront of our efforts will help lead to longer, healthier, and more productive lives for all Americans.

A National Cross-Sector Prevention Approach

The National Prevention Strategy will present a vision, goals, recommendations, and action items that public, private, nonprofit organizations, and individuals can meet to reduce preventable death, disease, and disability in the United States. Working closely with partners across the country in both the public and private sectors, the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council (National Prevention Council) will develop the National Prevention Strategy. The seventeen federal departments and agencies that comprise the National Prevention Council bring diverse missions and assets from various sectors. To provide guidance to the National Prevention Council, the President will establish an Advisory Group on prevention, health promotion, and integrative and public health composed of not more than 25 nonfederal members.

Areas such as transportation, education, housing, environment, and human services affect the health of all Americans. The reach and impact of the National Prevention Strategy will rely on a cross-sector collaborative approach. The job of implementing the National Prevention Strategy must include the participation, coordination, leadership, and commitment of all parts of society. This includes State, Tribal and local governments, businesses, faith communities, philanthropy, the scientific and medical communities, and educational institutions in order to successfully improve the health of Americans.

Building on Existing Initiatives that Improve American's Health

While the National Prevention Strategy is an important component of the Affordable Care Act's focus on prevention, it will build on and complement the progress made by the Administration's current strategies that improve health. For instance, the National Prevention Strategy will be aligned with the national health objectives set forth in Healthy People 2020, the First Lady's *Let's Move!* Campaign to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity, the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, the Department of Transportation's Sustainable Communities, the Office of the National Drug Control Policy's 2010 National Drug Control Strategy, and many others.

The National Prevention Strategy

An Unprecedented Opportunity to Improve the Nation's Health through Prevention

Focusing on Communities and Where People Live, Work, Learn, and Play

Building and supporting community environments that make healthy choices easy and affordable is critical to helping people achieve and maintain good health. The National Prevention Strategy will focus on actions that improve the health of communities—where people live, work, learn, and play. Complementing this focus, the National Prevention Strategy will also recognize that people need to be empowered with tools and information needed to make those choices and acknowledge the importance of both clinical and community prevention resources.

The National Prevention Strategy will include actions that address prevention and promote healthy development and healthy behaviors throughout all stages of life. It will embrace an integrated model of prevention that spans clinical and community settings. The health of Americans is often influenced by the neighborhood in which they live, the schools they attend, the availability of healthy foods, and the opportunities they have for employment, housing, and education. As a result, the health of Americans can be improved by the policies and programs of many different federal Departments, as well as the initiatives led by the private sector and programs put forth by states, local governments, and communities.

A Focus on Prevention Strategies that Work and Measuring Progress

The National Prevention Strategy will base its recommendations and action items on evidence-based prevention policy and program initiatives. It will prioritize strategies proven to work, that make the most efficient use of existing resources, that can be sustained over time, and that have the greatest impact on the largest number of people. The most effective and sustainable prevention efforts often involve policy, systems, and environmental changes that increase individuals' ability to make the healthy choices that maintain life-long good health.

The current evidence for prevention is strong, and when effective strategies are implemented they drive significant improvement in the public's health. However, there are areas where additional and more effective strategies are needed. Thus, ongoing and future research will be critical to addressing unmet prevention and wellness needs, and new evidence-based strategies will be incorporated as they emerge. We are seeking public comment on additional data to assess existing draft recommendations, their potential impact, and their scientific basis. The National Prevention Strategy will be developed based on the best available research and evidence and will include specific, measurable action items that can be tracked over time to measure progress.

The National Prevention Strategy will reflect the importance of tracking progress to ensure accountability. The Strategy will establish a target for its primary goal—currently drafted as “to achieve significant gains in Americans' life expectancy at birth and at age 65”. It also will identify priority indicators and benchmarks to track progress of implementation.